

2008 CORE PLUS ORIENTATION CONFERENCE EVALUATION RESULTS

Respondents were asked to fill out an evaluation form rating the conference on a number of points. The first eight questions asked respondents to answer based on a five-point scale (Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, 5-1). Respondents were then asked to provide narrative answers to several questions. Part I of this Evaluation Results Report will provide the numerical averages for each of the first eight questions. Part II will provide the narrative answers to the remaining open-ended questions.

Part I: What did you think of the conference?

1. The conference increased my knowledge and understanding of the CORE PLUS program. **95.5% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Average score: 4.01**
2. I became better aware of relevant policies and procedures and their interrelationships. **85% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Average score: 4.15**
3. I have a better understanding of the types and sources of assistance that CORE PLUS offers, including the roster management and how to access neutrals. **83.59% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Average score: 4.15**
4. The conference was a valuable professional development experience. **86.5% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Average score: 4.26**
5. The general session topics were important. **88% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Average score: 4.31**
6. There was sufficient variety in the training offered. **74.8% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Average score: 4.03**
7. The handouts were useful. **88.2% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Average score: 4.24** (note that the evaluation form used by participants incorrectly listed this question as a second number 5)
8. The facility was appropriate for the event. **77.8% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Average score: 4.16** (note that the evaluation form used by participants incorrectly listed this question as number 7)

Part II: Narrative Answers

Please give two examples of things you learned in this conference that you can use in your job:

The responses to this question varied; however, some respondents focused on substantially similar items to identify in answering this question. Here are the items listed, with those mentioned multiple times being listed first.

- Learned more about CORE PLUS and able to share information with staff or other employees (22 out of 68 or 32%)
- Learned more (or understand better) what an integrated conflict management system is and how CORE PLUS is meant to be such a system (12 out of 68 or 17.6%)
- Learned about the resources CADR has to offer and the ability to use the blanket purchase agreements to access resources (17 out of 68 or 25%)
- Networking opportunities; meeting and knowing bureau contacts (14 out of 68 or 20.5%)
- Facilitation skills and knowing about graphic facilitation (8 out of 68 or 11.7%)
- Convening and intake knowledge (6 out of 68 or 8.8%)
- Mediating EEO cases (8 out of 68 or 11.7%)
- Confidentiality in mediation (6 out of 68 or 8.8%)
- Emotional Intelligence course information (3 out of 68 or 4.4%)
- Role of EEO and HR in the program (2 out of 68 or 2.9%)
- Writing resolution or settlement agreements (2 out of 68 or 2.9%)
- How to have difficult conversations; interact better with employees (4 out of 68 or 5.8%)
- Laughing yoga works (2 out of 68 or 2.9%)
- Styles of persuasion (2 out of 68 or 2.9%)

The remaining examples were mentioned by one respondent each:

- Coaching availability through CORE PLUS
- Will be proactive in dealing with conflict
- Appreciate different perspectives on the same issue
- Value of collaboration
- Decision-making style
- Training resources
- Introduction to mediation; need more training
- Handbook information – will share it
- Bureau needs a communication plan for CORE PLUS
- Perceptions
- CORE PLUS connection to other programs/functions

What topics do you want or need more information about? The various responses are listed below (in no particular order), and where more than one person made a substantially similar response, the number of persons who made the response is indicated in parentheses.

- Drafting settlement agreements (2)
- Actual mechanics of roster management and how to access it
- More advanced techniques training
- EEO process (2)
- Confidentiality (4)
- Graphic representation of timelines for EEO, ER, plain ADR
- Who should keep which ADR records?
- What will electronic tracking system look like?
- When will standardized forms be available?
- Information specific to implementing DOI CORE PLUS
- Suggestions for consistent information for HR community to appropriately inform employees about CORE PLUS
- How is CORE PLUS going to roll out in Reclamation and where?
- Facilitation and coaching – especially dealing with a non-interested participating party
- Development of coaching skills (4)
- Ombuds training
- Specific EEO and HR policy and how they can relate to ADR/CORE (2)
- Training opportunities for new neutrals
- Neutrals need to be advised/educated on EEO/HR options/redress rights – a lot of confusion in the training sessions – more training needed
- Graphic flow chart for mediators on their role in EEO process
- Training information for certification as a mediator
- Difficult conversations
- CADR processes
- More detailed guidance on BDRS responsibilities
- Bureau specific procedures for integrating the components of CORE PLUS (logistics of convening, filing records, informing necessary folks, etc)
- Convening
- How the program is going to be effectively “stepped down” by the BDRSs, so that all DOI employees have information and easy access to the program. It’s not clear yet (within FWS at least).
- Structural step down into bureaus and regions
- There needs to be more emphasis developed on EEO’s impact on the mediation process. There really is a need to design a mediator’s checklist that informs us of possible EEO intervention in the mediation process.
- How to access resources
- Record keeping
- Specifics on how mediation is used for grievances and timelines

What did you like most about the conference? The various responses are listed below (in no particular order), and where more than one person made a substantially similar response, the number of persons who made the response is indicated in parentheses.

- Getting to know the participants that will be involved (i.e., HR, EEO, etc) (8)
- Break out sessions
- Great people
- All of the information and reference materials (4)
- Meeting a cross section of ADR related people across DOI (17)
- Presentation on confidentiality
- Sessions that talked about nuts and bolts, law, etc
- Enthusiasm of the group and their commitment to this program (2)
- Very good facilitation; attention to audience needs
- The effort that everyone put into making this program come together
- Organization of the event
- Interaction with participants, both facilitated and not
- Albuquerque (location) and the expert presenters
- Follow-on discussion of threaded case study on Thursday where we got into more of the nuts and bolts of how issues are raised.
- Enjoyed the general sessions.
- Meeting like-minded and diverse co-workers
- Very well organized conference (4)
- The opportunity to have a dialogue with other agencies within the Department.
- Workshop on Wednesday
- Treasure hunt and the correlation between HR, EEO, Ethics, and SOL
- Clarifications and Q&A hosted by Elena
- The big scenario was good and complex enough to work. (3)
- Evident that DOI wants to be involved from top down in conflict management. Need to get out the word to “walk the talk.” This conference was a great start.
- Last day role play (should have a whole day to through the entire case).
- Interactive sessions (2)
- The agenda was great, the pace was excellent, the interactions, networking, and emotional intelligence training.
- Liked having senior level officials here (2) – the fact that upper management was present validated the commitment.
- Specific skills training (but think it needs to be two days for mediators).
- Enthusiasm of presenters and attendees
- The energy and variety of teaching styles
- Everything!
- Group sessions, last day group sessions on graphics and elevator speeches, role plays, training sessions.
- The energy and connection that is occurring now with human beings.
- Impossible to choose.
- Good interaction with experts.

What did you like least about the conference? The various responses are listed below (in no particular order), and where more than one person made a substantially similar response, the number of persons who made the response is indicated in parentheses.

- Too policy driven, but I do understand it's very important that we know the policies.
- Lecture and the 4 Corners information table exercise
- Not enough time for training
- Not being able to go to more of the training sessions
- Hard to see information on flip charts from across the room
- Hard to hear without microphones (2)
- Our table members visiting each of 4 tables
- "Think of someone you love."
- That more centralization hasn't yet been thought about and implemented, in terms of policies, forms, etc.
- Some of the breakouts were chaotic because of crowds; think of breakout rooms.
- A little too long.
- Move training sessions to last day.
- Temperature regulation of the meeting room (3)
- The graphic facilitator was kind of lost.
- Unseasonably cold weather (know you don't have control of that). (2)
- No opportunity to attend all classes (3)
- Needed clearer understanding about how CADR will assist existing EEO programs.
- Treasure hunt concept was good but it was not ideal for a group this size. As everyone needed all the information, it would have been more useful to have done it with entire class.
- Tuesday and Wednesday seemed repetitious.
- Nothing notable (4)
- Unclear guidance on group tasks.
- The manner in which we were supposed to execute the exercise; couldn't hear; felt like it was a hodge podge.
- Lack of direction from/for specific bureau.
- Was hoping to get a clearer picture as to how time frames would be adhered to when an employee who has an EEO problem goes to CORE PLUS first.
- Food was not great.
- Please be sure to introduce all speakers by name, who they represent, and where they work.
- Undated materials – every sheet of paper should have a footnote that includes the conference name and date as well as current document dates.
- Not enough interactive learning was used – lots of sitting and listening
- The leads in my bureau leaving early. Would have liked to have spent more time with them.
- Visuals I could not see.
- I didn't think the exercise on Tuesday going to different tables for handbook inserts worked well (2)
- Might consider having facilitators when we have the breakout table exercise (EEO, SOL, HR, etc) because it was difficult to hear and sometimes people dominated the

conversations. Also would have been good to somehow capture the questions and answers in that session.

- The facilitators were good, but internal DOI facilitators could have been just as effective; would save money.
- Not enough training sessions.
- Thursday a.m. role play about convening didn't work and created confusion.
- 4 Corners exercise
- Not enough structured opportunities to provide suggestions on how to roll out the program (communications strategy, marketing, etc.)
- The Mercado – too much loudness and confusion
- The similarities to other conflict management training that I have received elsewhere
- Lack of information on the cost of services
- The Wednesday training ½ day sessions were too short
- Never enough time for questions and answers
- The general sessions

Which training session did you attend on Wed., Jan. 16? What was your overall evaluation of the skills training day?

EEO and Mediation

- Trainer was great but overall the participants were concerned more about mediation of EEO cases rather than EEO law
- Very good
- Give it a 4 out of 5
- OK training but could have been more specific to EEO mediation and CORE PLUS
- Good try but I wanted a bit more structured. Too much emphasis on mediation but this was good – just wanted more EEO.
- Disappointing. Did not meet the mark. Great instructor
- Need to talk us through an actual case...what forms are used when, by whom...there seems to be a lot of duplication between CORE PLUS and EEO.
- Great training session (2)
- Overall, I would give it a 5 on a 1-10 scale. I was hoping for more information on what was unique or different about EEO cases. We did get some of this information, but then there was mediation
- I thought the training was very good. I would have appreciated the chance to attend 2 sessions, though. (2)
- Outstanding!
- The overall presentation was good but I felt there was not enough emphasis on how EEO affects the mediation process in certain key areas, such as the written agreement and mediation beyond the informal complaint stage.
- 10+++ !
- Well done, although much of the information provided was just general mediation information, rather than EEO-specific.
- Not what it was billed to be; what was presented was good.

Mediating Reasonable Accommodation

- Very good
- Great
- Excellent

Conflict Coaching

- Good
- Good information on excellent topic. Training pace was too leisurely for time allotted.
- I was looking for more information and guidance on how to coach.
- Not very effective.

Facilitation

- Level was more basic than I expected it would be
- Good session!
- Well done. Instructor was flexible.
- Very good facilitator who was prepared for 101 class and had advanced students.
- Very good, but thought it was working with groups in conflict and it wasn't.
- Sorry I didn't sign up for emotional intelligence; training was not as advertised.

Settlement Writing

- Well worth it
- Very basic
- Good information on excellent topic; training pace too leisurely for time allotted
- Could have been longer
- I thought instructor was not prepared
- Good

Conflict Management Skills (Getting to the CORE of Conflict)

- Well worth it
- Outstanding
- Extremely relevant and well-presented; useful in my position
- Could have been longer
- Great
- Excellent

Styles of Persuasion

- Very good
- Extremely relevant and well-presented; useful in my position
- Good (3)
- Very good; terrific trainer
- Great – class interrupted by loudspeaker and other noise; instructor handled situation very well
- Good refresher

Difficult Conversations

- Very good

- Good (4)
- Great
- Good refresher; good dialog between trainer and attendees

Emotional Intelligence

- Excellent (2)
- Interesting class. Good insight into my styles and what skills I need to improve on.
- Great – lots of take aways that I can use with customers.
- Very good

General comments about training day

- Wish it could have been more in depth
- Very good skills training; would have liked additional opportunities
- Overall, a good idea, less than perfectly executed (made specific comments on individual class evaluations).
- The Wednesday training sessions that were ½ day were too short.

Please feel free to offer any additional comments or suggestions below.

- Unable to attend all the training sessions I wanted to; would like the materials via the internet.
- Overall, very good conference! Thankful for the opportunity to attend and gain more knowledge and resources that will increase my skills as a mediator either in the workplace or personally.
- Would it be worth having a “help desk” type of automated system in place for the various intake points to use to sort through initial calls, etc? With a built-in “knowledge data base.” These aren’t all that expensive if you don’t get too fancy.
- Are there FAQ’s on the CADR website?
- Very difficult with only collateral duty EO counselors and DOI CORE PLUS neutrals.
- Wonderful week.
- Thank you for an excellent conference. DOI conferences in the past have not been as meaningful and educational as this conference. Great work!
- The exercise on the first day was unrealistic...6 pages and 14 tables...we all discussed the first few issues. It would be better to divide up the issues between the tables.
- More training time would be more valuable...2 days and offer the sessions more than once.
- It would be valuable for DOI to facilitate the co-mediation opportunities. It is always mentioned as a need, but there is no common communication between bureaus to facilitate co-mediation opportunities.
- Give more general information before launching into all these group exercises.
- The conference was definitely worthwhile, informative, and well done. Thank you all.
- As a new person, this CORE PLUS process is confusing. The conference never really addressed the flow and how this all works together. A flow chart would have been helpful. I would have liked a 2-4 hour block for new folks, with Step A-Z then start the conference on a more knowledgeable foot. Maybe an evening session? Best conference

I have been to making sure the agencies got to work together. Kudos. Loved the wedding table approach with us ending up with our regions.

-- It would have been nice to attend all the training sessions that were offered. It is obvious that a lot of time and effort went into planning this training especially with the seating and session assignments. Thank you!

-- Definition of roles – suggest only one CADR intake/coordinator person per region/office to eliminate confusion and build trust within organization. I realize this is a bureau decision.

-- Day 2 small table activities were frustrating and very low value. Q&A's in plenary session provide optimal value to all. Need a lot more clarity about how the forms, targets, and distribution between CORE PLUS mediators and EEO is to work. Make the conference a week long thing with a lot more options to participate.

-- Provide a comprehensive list of all speakers, facilitators that provides: name, mail address, phone number, fax number, and email address.

-- Put a maximum of 8 people per table. Too many at this conference. Could not even open binders.

-- The hotel was nice but without a car, I was very limited in choices to eat. On the other hand, being near Old Town was great.

-- It was not perfect, but still an incredible job pulling it together. My primary impression was that it was very successful. I made contacts with people in other agencies and offices that will help in the future. I still would like to see some better resolution to the collateral duty issue. As we do more with less and more and more programs bog us down I think more bosses are going to refuse to let mediators continue to do 20%. Please think about some mediators being full time or in a position where the mediation is a part of the job and not limited to 20%.

-- Food in this hotel was so horrible, it's hard to describe. Otherwise, thanks for the great planning, looking forward to our next conference.

-- I just need to do my part to ensure this great process continues for the benefit of all. Elena, we love you – great job!

-- Wow, what a lot of work went into this. It was excellent. Thank you so much!

-- There is a big disconnect between the BDRSs and the regional and field levels. Suggest utilizing BDRS more as liaisons to launch and implement the CORE PLUS program.

-- Facilitator (Pattie) talked a little too much in the 4 Corners exercise. It seemed to chill responses from the group.

-- While it was good to have people from EEO, HR, and CORE PLUS together in one place, it was difficult to work with all of the people. Microphones helped, but it's hard to hear and be heard among so many people. It's also hard to effectively train an audience with such different levels of knowledge. Some of the questions and comments on day 3 morning went on too long – beyond my attention span.

-- We need more detailed information of what our specific bureau, region, park, or office procedures are. I still feel that I don't know what to do in certain situations. I still need to ask someone else for procedures.

-- Not enough time on agreements, time lines for grievances and EEO.

-- Procedures for different kinds of mediation would have been good.

-- All handouts should have been in the binders. Too confusing to know if we got all the information.

-- I was very sorry to see a contractor doing the facilitation of this conference. For a department that does facilitation, we should be able to facilitate our own conference. The money would have been better spent on participant travel so more people could have come. I would have preferred participants from the different bureaus facilitate different parts of the conference. We would have gotten more relevant information.

-- The course was disorganized. The new mediators seemed more confused than they were before. On Tuesday the use of time and resources was inefficient. To have people walking around to individual tables to get information did not work. If 10 people were standing at a table when something significant and important was said, only maybe 2 people understood its significance and the other 8 ignored it or didn't hear it and did not report it because they didn't ask the question. Of the 2 people that understood, one or both reported it incorrectly because they filtered the information through their own biases. Important information was denied to the majority of the people at the training. Please do not do another course this way.